

New USDA Nutrition Initiative Targets Moms and Nutrition Educators just in time.

By Nancy Johner, USDA Under Secretary

What's for dinner, Mom?

It's a question women with children face every day. And given the disturbing rise in childhood obesity and related health problems, it's a question that's taken on crucial importance. For women with low income, the question can be especially hard to answer.

That's why USDA recently released *Loving Your Family, Feeding Their Future: Nutrition Education Through the Food Stamp Program*. It is one of the first comprehensive nutrition education initiatives based on the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and MyPyramid and addresses cultural, literacy, and language barriers faced by many Food Stamp Program families.

USDA's 15 nutrition programs reach one in five Americans. The Food Stamp Program is the largest domestic nutrition program and serves more than 26 million low-income people each month. Food stamp benefits, intended to supplement a low income family's food budget, can add as much as \$518 per month for a family of four with no income. In addition to benefits, the Food Stamp Program offers nutrition education to help participants select healthy foods and choose physically active lifestyles.

Loving Your Family, Feeding Their Future is geared towards mothers because they play a key role in choosing and buying food for their families. Mothers are also role models and have significant influence on their children's eating habits and physical activity behaviors. As a mother of two, I know how difficult it is for busy moms to shop, plan and cook nutritious meals and snacks everyday. That is why this information can be particularly helpful for low-income moms who have the added challenge of trying to feed their families on a tight budget.

Loving Your Family, Feeding Their Future includes exercise and nutrition tips, low-cost, tasty, and easy to prepare recipes, in both English and Spanish. *Loving Your Family, Feeding Their Future* features a variety of cutting-edge communication techniques to help anchor these important nutrition messages, including:

- A self-teaching format (a mother telling her story to other mothers).
- Full-color images to highlight key information.
- Easy, tasty, low-cost recipes and menus
- Real-world examples to emphasize instruction points.

Loving Your Family, Feeding Their Future also includes a handbook, discussion materials and an online training module to assist nutrition educators in their work with food stamp participants and eligible individuals. Educators are encouraged to download the materials or order extra copies of selected items at: <http://foodstamp.nal.usda.gov>

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